

Formal Approaches to Second Language Acquisition



This presentation is designed to give a brief overview of formal approaches to SLA, as well as contextual factors that affect SLA and tips for teachers.

Sirci Stinson
McMurray Middle School
sirci.stinson@mnps.org

Skinner and Behaviorism Theory



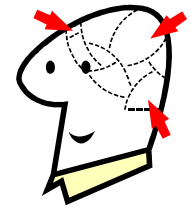
- This theory states that children learn language by imitation.
- Stimulus or a lack of stimulus prompts learners to imitate what they hear.
- Positive or negative responses will then prompt learners to keep on imitating or refine what they are imitating as their language.



Chomsky and The LAD Theory



- This is part of the nativist perspective,
- This theory states that learners have a language acquisition device (LAD).
- The LAD is a brain structure that consists of neural wiring.
- The LAD theory states that learners have an innate ability to know the structure and rules of a language, and this facilitates language learning.
- The LAD theory challenged Skinner and the behaviorism perspective.
- This theory also led to a reexamination of the role of transfer in second language learning.



Innatism



- Language is not learned like other disciplines, but is acquired through an innate ability.
- Innatism lead to Universal Grammar.
- Universal Grammar is the innate knowledge of the rules and principles that are found in every language.
- Universal Grammar may not be available for second language learners.



Interactionist

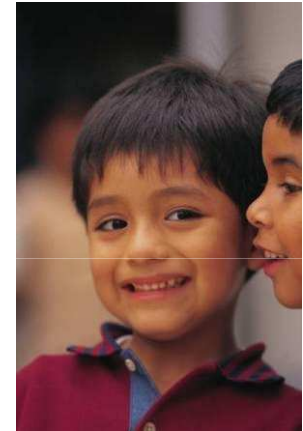
- Interactionist approach exists between the nature versus nurture approaches.
- Interactionist approach – three main theories



Piaget's Developmental Cognitive Theory

Vgotsky's Social Interaction Theory

Information Processing Model



Interactionist approach focuses on social interactions between L2 learners and the target language speakers.

These interactions give the L2 learners feedback on both correct and incorrect language usage.

Critical Period Hypothesis – Age and The L2 Learner



- Natural language acquisition only takes place between the ages of 2 and 12 years old.
- Due to a part of the brain -
 - before age 2 the brain is not ready
 - after the age of 12 the brain loses plasticity.



The Critical Period Hypothesis limits both native language learning and second language learning.

Other Critical Factors That Affect L2 Acquisition

Walqui – 3 categories that affect second language learning



Language

- language distance
- knowledge of L2
- L1 proficiency

Learner

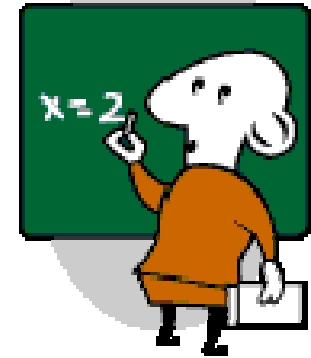
- motivation for L2
- support from home
- classroom diversity

Learning Process

- style of learning
- cultural of learner
- interactions



Tips For Teachers



- First and foremost get to know your students.
- Design lessons with social interactions in mind to encourage linguistic interactions.
- Keep students motivated
- Incorporate the students' cultures – use books etc..
- Make it important to the students – use real life situations.

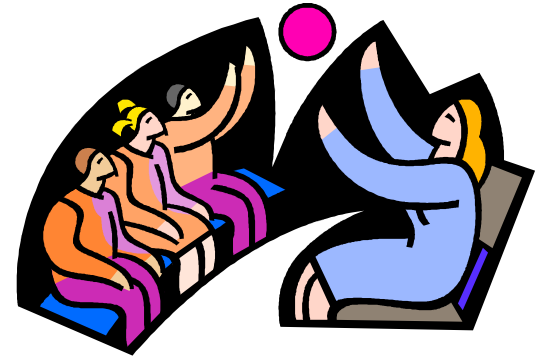


ELL Students at McMurray Middle School

Interactionist Approach

- Provide many opportunities for academic and social interactions in the classroom
- Use cooperative learning whenever possible and use heterogeneous groups
- Encourage continued learning of L1
- Provide continuous feedback to students

ESL Learning in Mrs. Stinson's Classroom



- In Mrs. Stinson's Classroom we prefer the Interactionist Approach
- We give feedback, both positive and negative in a loving and respectful manner
- We have conversations, both academic and social, where we express ourselves in a respectful manner.
- We work in groups with Mrs. Stinson as the facilitator, providing input and scaffolding for language support

Resources on Second Language Acquisition



- Main SLA Approaches
view at: <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/SLA/index.htm>
- Glossary of terms on first and second language acquisition
view at: <http://earthrenewal.org/secondlang.htm>
- ESL/Bilingual Resource Guide for Mainstream Teachers
view at: http://www.pps.k12.or.us/curriculum/PDFs/ESL_Modifications.pdf
- Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition by Stephen D Krashen – online book which is full of information
view at:
http://www.sdkrashen.com/Principles_and_Practice/Principles_and_Practice.pdf
- Creating Teaching Practices within ESL Environments: Understanding Second Language Acquisition Concepts – a PowerPoint resource
view at: <https://www.azbn.gov/documents/news/2010/educators-retreat/Lavache.2nd%20Language%20Acquisition.pdf>

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Sirci Stinson

Contact: sirci.stinson@mnps.org

